REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated December 26, 2007. Claims 1-25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-25 have been rejected. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to further define the scope and novelty of the present invention, to include the limitations of their respective dependent claims 2-6 and 9-11, and to correct typographical and grammatical errors in order to place the claims in condition for allowance. Support for the amendments to the claims is found throughout the specification, and in particular, in respective dependent claims 2-6 and 9-11; Figure 2, elements 50a, 50b, and 160; Figure 3, steps 310, 312, 314, and 320; page 7, lines 4-6 and lines 18-22; and page 8, and lines 1-10, 16-19. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been presented. Claims 2-6 and 9-25 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 remain pending. Also, the Title and Abstract have been amended to reflect the cancellations to the claims. For the reasons set forth more fully below, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are allowable. Consequently, reconsideration, allowance, and passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the phone interview of March 20, 2008. We appreciate the courtesy and helpfulness of the Examiner in the interview. The claims have been amended in light of the points made by the Examiner in the interview.

Applicants do not concede in this application that the claims as previously presented are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious

prosecution of the remaining claims. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications. Nevertheless, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 6, 12, 17, and 23-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., (U.S. Patent No. 6,837,428 B2) in view of Jovicic et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,855,007).

Claims 2-5, 7-9, 13-16, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., in view of Jovicic et al., as applied to claims 1 and 12, and further in view of Nichtberger et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,882,675).

Claims 10 - 11, and 21 - 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., in view of Jovicic et al., as applied to claims 8, 9, 19 and 20 above, and further in view of Goodwin, III et al., (U.S. Patent No. 6,696,920 B1).

Examiner Stated:

As per claim 1, Lee et al., teaches a method for processing coupons by a self checkout system, wherein the self checkout system comprises at least one self checkout station coupled to a server (see column 5, line 63 through column 6 line 5, which teach a self check out system such as the automatic checkout system, line 40, is connected to BOSS controller that is in turn connected to a local area network. Examiner construes that the BOSS controller is a server).

(a) receiving a coupon from a customer by one of the at least one self checkout stations (see column 7, line 52 through line 56 which teach a shopper scans coupons that are related to items that were previously scanned and the coupon's code is matched to the item's code it is related to);

(b) attempting to validate the coupon against at least one item scanned by the customer (see column 7, line 52 through line 61 which teach a shopper scans items and scans in coupons related to those items. When both the items and coupons are scanned a coupon code and the related item code is matched to very if the coupon applies to the related scanned item).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose:

(c) storing the coupon in a coupon pool at the server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step of storing a coupon in a coupon pool at a server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users...

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections. Claims 2-6 and 9-25 have been canceled.

The present invention provides a method for processing coupons by a self checkout system, where the self checkout system comprises at least one self checkout station coupled to a server. In accordance with the present invention, the method includes receiving a coupon from a customer, where the coupon is a paper coupon that is fed into a coupon reader of the at least one self checkout stations; attempting to validate the coupon against at least one item scanned by the customer; allowing the customer to choose whether to store the unvalidated coupon, and if the customer chooses to store the unvalidated coupon, converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon. The method also includes collecting tracking information related to the coupon and storing the tracking information in a file at the server; transmitting the electronic coupon from the one self checkout

station to the server; destroying the paper coupon after the paper coupon has been converted into an electronic coupon. The method also includes storing the electronic coupon into one of two coupon pools at the server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, where one coupon pool is a global pool having coupons stored in the global pool are accessible by all customers, where the other coupon pool is a personal pool that is associated with the customer such that coupons stored in the personal pool are accessible only by the customer, where the tracking information comprises the coupon pool in which the coupon is stored, where the stored electronic coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction, where the global pool allows the second customer to search the global pool for a coupon that validates against an item scanned by the second customer during the subsequent sales transaction, where the global pool allows a second customer in the subsequent sales transaction to utilize the coupon, where a value of the coupon is deducted from a price of the item if the coupon and the item are validated, and where the personal pool allows the customer to access the global pool, select at least one coupon in the global pool, and transfer the selected coupon to a personal account at the server. The method also includes allowing the customer to search one or more of the global pool and the personal pool for coupons that can be applied to any scanned items by the customer. Lee in view of Jovicic does not teach or suggest these features, as discussed below.

The Examiner requested examples from the specification were a given coupon does not validate. Page 7, lines 15-19, of the specification describes

some examples were a given coupon may not validate. For example, a coupon may not validate, "because the coupon does not apply to any items in the sales transaction, or the coupon applies to an item, but the number of units of the item does not correspond to the coupon promotion, etc." Applicants respectfully submit that these are sufficient examples illustrating were a given coupon may not validate. Also, the claims are not directed to why a coupon may not be valid but rather to a method for processing a coupon that is not valid.

Lee discloses a self-checkout apparatus. A self-checkout system includes a first conveyor having a security tunnel which measures a characteristic of a product placed on the conveyor. A code identifying the product is first input into the system through UPC scanning or other input means, and then placed on the conveyor. When the characteristic of the product is measured (e.g., weight, height, width, length), it is compared to corresponding information within the system. If the data matches or is within a predetermined tolerance, the product is transported down the conveyor to a second conveyor, which further transports the product to a bagging area. When the customer is finished scanning products, an input device allows the customer to select self-payment through either cash, credit, debit, or other means (e.g., debt, store credit and the like). Other features include automatic security tag deactivation and coupon redemption. (Abstract.)

Jovicic discloses an electronic coupon communication system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks such as the Internet. The system comprises a first Internet node, an Internet coupon server and an Internet coupon notification center. The

Internet coupon server generates a unique Internet coupon using a coupon generation process. The Internet coupon server accepts an on-line selection of one of the available unique Internet coupons from a user of the Internet node and transmits the coupon back to the user's printing device or e-mail storage. It then records the transaction in its coupon database and notifies the transaction to the Internet Coupon Notification Center. The Internet Coupon Notification Center subsequently records the transaction. Furthermore, a coupon redemption center can electronically verify coupon validity and record coupon redemption by communicating with the Internet Coupon Notification Center. (Abstract.)

As discussed with the Examiner in the phone interview of March 20, 2008, Lee in view of Jovicic does not teach or suggest the combination of step as recited in amended independent claim 1. For example, neither Lee nor Jovicic teach or suggest receiving a coupon, where the "coupon is a paper coupon that is fed into a coupon reader of the at least one self checkout stations," as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Furthermore, neither Lee nor Jovicic teach or suggest the coupon pools, "wherein one coupon pool is a global pool having coupons stored in the global pool are accessible by all customers, wherein the other coupon pool is a personal pool that is associated with the customer such that coupons stored in the personal pool are accessible only by the customer," as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Furthermore, neither Lee nor Jovicic teach or suggest collecting tracking information related to the coupon, "wherein the tracking information comprises

the coupon pool in which the coupon is stored," as recited in amended

independent claim 1.

Dependent claim 8

Dependent claim 8 depends from amended independent claim 1.

Accordingly, the above-articulated arguments related to amended independent

claim 1 apply with equal force to claim 8, which is thus allowable over the cited

reference for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Dependent claim 8 is also

allowable based upon the added limitations that distinguish it over the cited art.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

Applicants' attorney believes this application is in condition for allowance.

Should any unresolved issues remain, Examiner is invited to call Applicants'

attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr./
Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr.
Reg. No. 30,801

Customer Number 47052
(650) 493-4540
(650) 493-4549